

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 564

By Faulkner

A RESOLUTION urging the United States Congress to enact the Medicare Rural Health Access Improvement Act of 2009.

WHEREAS, in 1986, the United States Congress enacted the Medicare disproportionate share (DSH) adjustment because of the belief that indigent patients are more costly to care for than middle-income and upper-income patients; and

WHEREAS, the intent of these payments is to help defray the high costs hospitals incur in treating indigent patients and, in general, for treating increasing numbers of uncompensated care patients; and

WHEREAS, when DSH was enacted, separate payment formulas were established that in effect discriminated against rural hospitals by setting both higher thresholds for DSH eligibility, as well as lower DSH payments once eligibility was attained; and

WHEREAS, large urban facilities (greater than 100 beds) can receive unlimited add-ons that correspond with the number of patients served, while rural and small urban (less than 100 beds) add-on payments are capped at 12% of the total amount of the inpatient payment; and

WHEREAS, eliminating temporarily the cap on Medicare DSH payments for rural and small urban hospitals and equalizing payments for all DSH hospitals will help ensure access to essential services for Tennessee communities served by their rural and small urban Tennessee hospitals; and

WHEREAS, the Medicare Rural Health Access Improvement Act of 2009 (S. 318) has been introduced in the U. S. Congress in order to amend title XVIII (Medicare) of the Social Security Act to eliminate temporarily the DSH adjustment cap; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that this General Assembly supports the Medicare Rural Health Access Improvement Act of 2009 (S. 318 of the 111th Congress), which would improve access to health care under the Medicare program for beneficiaries residing in rural areas.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this General Assembly urges the United States Congress to enact the Medicare Rural Health Access Improvement Act of 2009 (S. 318 of the 111th Congress) to help reduce the payment disparity that discriminates against rural hospitals treating a disproportionate share of indigent Americans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an enrolled copy of this resolution be transmitted to the Speaker and the Clerk of the U.S. House of Representatives, the President and the Secretary of the U.S. Senate, and each member of the Tennessee Congressional Delegation.